

(16) This discovery inspired Mr. Cutler to embark upon a research project that would consume more than a decade and take him to Australia.

(17) Retired United States Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Teddy W. Hanks, of Wichita Falls, Texas, who lost four of his World War II buddies in the crash, compiled a list of the casualties from United States archives in 1993 and began searching for their families.

(18) The Bakers Creek Memorial Association, in conjunction with the Washington Post and retired United States Army genealogy experts Charles Gailey and Arvon Staats, located 23 additional families of victims of the accident during the past two years.

(19) Joy Shingleton, Donnie Tenney, Wendy Andrus, and Wilma Post, the family of Army Air Corps Corporal Edward J. Tenney, of Buckhannon, West Virginia, helped to bring this recently uncovered World War II tragedy to light.

(20) The commander of the United States Fifth Air Force officially had notified the relatives of 36 of the 40 victims.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that an appropriate site in Arlington National Cemetery should be provided for a memorial marker to honor the memory of the 40 members of the Armed Forces of the United States who lost their lives in the air crash at Bakers Creek, Australia, on June 14, 1943, provided that the Secretary of the Army have exclusive authority to approve the design and site for the memorial marker.

AMENDMENT NO. 47 OFFERED BY MR. BRALEY OF IOWA

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title V, add the following new sections

SEC. 5. STUDY OF FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM ON FAMILY-TO-FAMILY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES UNDERGOING DEPLOYMENT.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a study to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of establishing a pilot program on family-to-family support for families of members of the National Guard and Reserves undergoing deployment, including assessments of—

(1) the effectiveness of family-to-family support programs in—

(A) the early identification and prevention of family problems for families of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed;

(B) the provision of peer support for such families;

(C) reducing adverse outcomes for children of such families, including poor academic performance, behavioral problems, and the adverse consequence of stress and anxiety; and

(D) improving family readiness and post-deployment transition for such families;

(2) the feasibility and advisability of utilizing spouses of members of the Armed Forces to act as counselors for spouses and families of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed in order to assist such spouses and families in coping with the deployment of such members throughout their deployment cycle; and

(3) the best practices for training spouses of members of the Armed Forces to act as counselors for spouses and families of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

SEC. 5. STUDY REGARDING IMPROVING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, INFANTS, AND TODDLERS OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE UNDERGOING DEPLOYMENT.

(a) STUDY REQUIRED.—

(1) STUDY.—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of entering into a contract or other agreement with a private sector entity having expertise in the health and well-being of families and children, infants, and toddlers in order to enhance and develop support services for children of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed.

(2) TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES.—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall consider the need—

(A) to develop materials for parents and other caretakers of children of members of the National Guard and Reserve who are deployed to assist such parents and caretakers in responding to the adverse implications of such deployment (and the death or injury of such members during such deployment) for such children, including the role such parents and caretakers can play in addressing and mitigating such implications;

(B) to develop programs and activities to increase awareness throughout the military and civilian communities of the adverse implications of such deployment (and the death or injury of such members during such deployment) for such children and their families and to increase collaboration within such communities to address and mitigate such implications;

(C) to develop training for early child care and education, mental health, health care, and family support professionals to enhance the awareness of such professionals of their role in assisting families in addressing and mitigating the adverse implications of such deployment (and the death or injury of such members during such deployment) for such children; and

(D) to conduct research on best practices for building psychological and emotional resiliency in such children in coping with the deployment of such members.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

AMENDMENT NO. 48 OFFERED BY MR. MITCHELL

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 627, strike lines 5 through 7 and insert the following:

“(3) Before transmittal of medical records of a member to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the member (or an individual legally recognized to make medical decisions on behalf of that member) is presented with a written form, the voluntary signing of which shall authorize the transfer of the medical records of the member from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as limiting or otherwise altering the applicability of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 to medical records maintained by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

AMENDMENT NO. 50 OFFERED BY MR. WALZ OF MINNESOTA

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Section 523, add at the end the following:

(g) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a study on the tuition assistance program carried out under section 2007 of title 10, United States Code. The study shall—

(A) identify the number of service members eligible for assistance under the program, and the number who actually receive the assistance;

(B) assess the extent to which the program affects retention rates; and

(C) assess the extent to which State tuition assistance programs affects retention rates in those States.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 9 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the study.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 403, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Chairman, I urge the committee to adopt the amendments en bloc, all of which have been examined by both the majority and the minority.

Madam Chairman, at this time I yield 1 minute to my friend, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Missouri and the gentleman from California.

My amendment simply requires the Department of Defense to examine a process by which they would further add for the collection of data by which our servicemembers could rely on an apples-to-apples comparison of our military health care system, so that they could get a proper evaluation of the status of our health care system, so that we could avoid the kinds of anecdotal stories that we found out through the Walter Reed scandal.

We shouldn't be finding this out through stories. We ought to be able to find this out through the garnering of data. And this is one of the ways that we seek to do so. By garnering this information just like we would through our regular health care system, we should do so through our military health care system, and that is what this amendment would do.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my friend from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman for yielding and both him and the ranking member from California for accepting this amendment.

This is an important amendment that is a first step in solving a very serious problem on our military bases both here in the States and abroad; and it is a problem that, unfortunately, spills over into our communities. And this is the issue of members of criminal street gangs joining the military and getting the training that they get in the military and now, unfortunately,